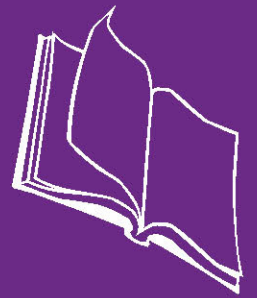


**The
Emily
Center**



Cast Care

Name of Child: _____ Date: _____

Cast Care

What is a cast?

A cast is a hard dressing made of plaster or fiberglass. When the cast is no longer needed for healing, it is taken off.

Why is a cast used?

A cast keeps bones in place until they heal. It may be used to line up the ends of a broken bone. It also helps keep bones in place after surgery.

If you take care of your cast well, your bones are more likely to heal correctly.

What does it feel like to get a cast?

- A cast is put on in a special room, called the Cast Room.
- When the cast is put on, it feels wet and very warm. It feels cooler as it dries.
- While the cast is being put on, there may be some pain.

My cast is a:

fiberglass cast plaster cast

The color of my cast: _____

My cast will be dry in about: _____

The cast must be dry before it can hold the bones in place. To help the cast dry faster, keep it open to the air. Do not cover the cast.

Until the cast is dry, rest it on a pillow, not on something hard.

yes no Do not walk on the leg with the cast until the cast is dry.

How long does the cast stay on?

A cast is usually on from three to six weeks. X-rays will be taken of the bone from time to time, to see how it is healing. When the bone is healed, your cast will be taken off.

How to stay comfortable in a cast

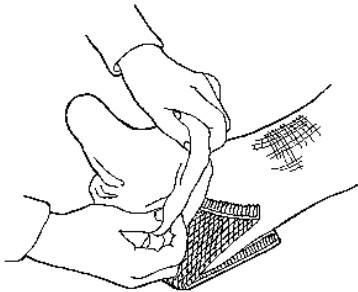
You will probably have some swelling under the cast. A little swelling may cause pressure, but it is normal. Too much swelling may be painful. This is not OK.

You can keep the swelling down if you:

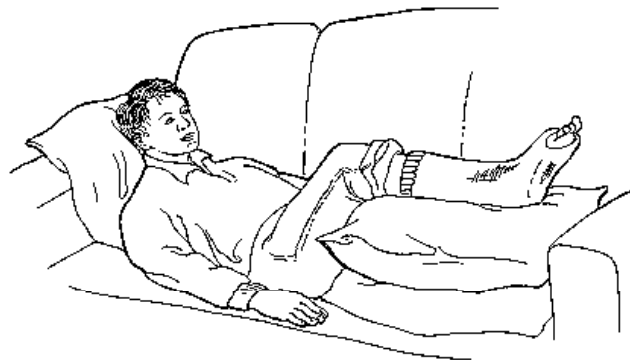
- Keep your healing arm or leg up above the level of your heart.
- Turn every two or three hours.
- Use pillows or blankets to support the cast. Put pillows under and around your cast to cushion it.
- When sleeping you may put a big sock over your toes to keep them warm.



Use pillows or blankets to support the cast.



When sleeping you may put a big sock over your toes to keep them warm.



Keep your healing arm or leg up above the level of your heart.

Taking care of your skin and the cast

Here are some things you can do to keep your skin healthy around and under the cast:

- If your skin gets red around the edge of the cast, a little body lotion may help it feel better. Do not get lotion under the cast.

- If the cast has a rough or sharp edge,

yes no File it down with a metal file

yes no Cover it with fabric tape or moleskin (see page 8 to learn how to petal a cast)

- If your skin itches under the cast, set a hair dryer on low, and blow it down the cast, where it itches.

- Do not try to scratch itchy skin under the cast. A scratch could get infected. Germs could grow easily under the cast.

- Do not put anything under the cast. Things could press on the skin and cause a sore.



If your skin itches under the cast, set a hair dryer on low, and blow it down the cast, where it itches.

yes no Do not get the cast wet.

— If a little water splashes on the cast, let it dry in the sun or set a hair dryer on low, and blow it on the cast to dry.

— If your cast gets wet down to the padding, If your skin itches under the cast, set a hair dryer on low, and call your doctor. blow it down the cast, where it itches.

- You may use a light dusting of cornstarch around the edge of the cast

- Keep the cornstarch out from under the cast. It can form lumps under the cast and be uncomfortable.

- Do not use talcum powder or baby powder around the cast.

If the skin under the cast is very itchy, call your doctor.

- yes no Do not run or jump until your cast is taken off.
 yes no Do not climb until your cast is taken off.

Keeping Clean

- Every day, wash and dry the skin around the outside of the cast.
- Clean at the edge of the cast, only as far down as your fingers fit easily.
- As you clean around the cast, check for signs of redness or sores.

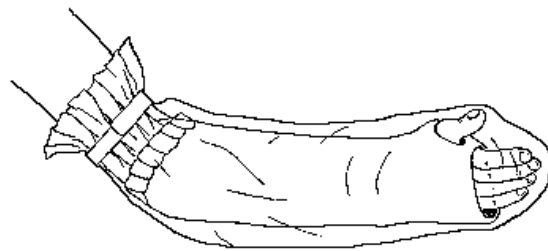
- yes no Do not let the cast get wet. Do not put the cast into water.

- yes no Wash with a sponge bath.

You may take a bath or shower with your cast. When you are done, set a hair dryer on low, and blow it on the cast to dry.

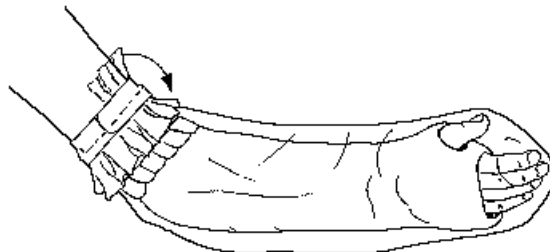
- yes no Cover the cast with a plastic bag when bathing.

- The top of the plastic bag should be above the cast.
- Tape it all the way around the arm or leg to keep water from getting in.
- Fold the plastic bag back over the tape. Then tape the folded part of the bag to the skin, all the way around.



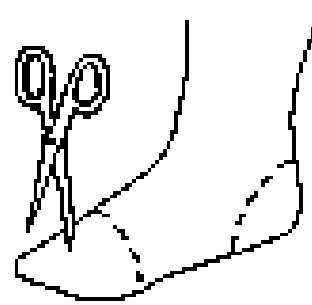
Tape it all the way around the arm or leg to keep water from getting in.

- yes no Do not use rubber bands around the cast.



Fold the plastic bag back over the tape.

- When outside, put a big sock over the cast. It will help keep dirt from getting under the cast.
- You may clean the outside of the cast with a damp cloth.
- For infants and toddlers, tuck diapers well, so the cast won't get wet or soiled.
- If your cast gets wet, set a hair dryer on low, and blow it on the cast to dry.



**Cut off the
toe and heel
of the sock.**



**When outside,
put a big sock over the cast.**

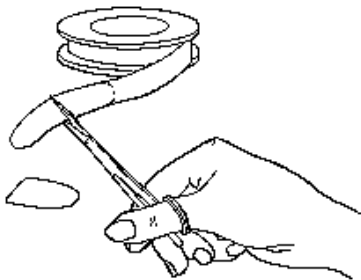
How to Petal a Cast

The edges of the cast can be rough. You can protect your skin by padding the edges of your cast. This is called petaling.

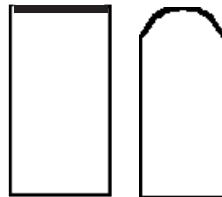
You will need:

- cloth tape or moleskin
- scissors

1. Cut a strip of tape or moleskin, 2 inches wide and 4 inches long.
2. Cut one end of the tape or moleskin round.

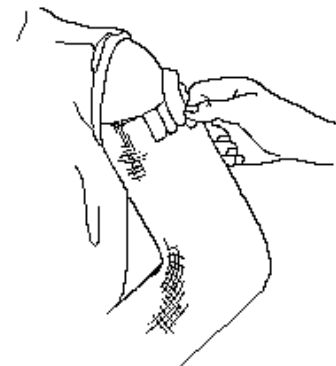


Step 1:
Cut the tape or moleskin

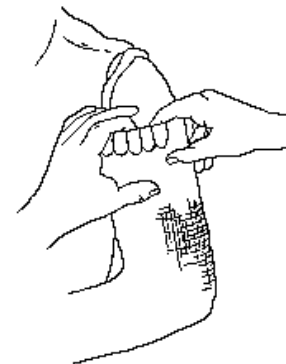


Step 2: Cut one end of the tape or moleskin round

3. Put the round end on the outside of the edge of the cast.
4. Tuck the straight end of the tape or moleskin inside the cast. Push down with your finger to make it smooth and flat.
5. Cut another strip of tape or moleskin, and do this again. Overlap the edge of each strip to make a smooth edge.
6. Do this until the whole edge of the cast is padded.



Step 3: Put the round end on the outside of the edge of the cast.



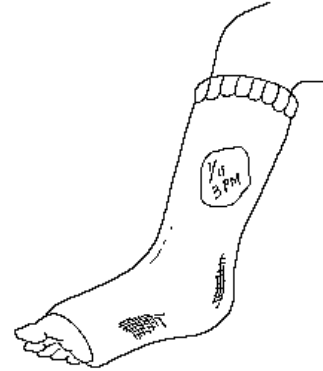
Step 4: Tuck the straight end of the tape or moleskin inside the cast.

Check your cast every day.

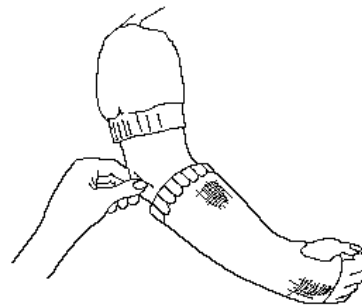


Call your doctor right away if:

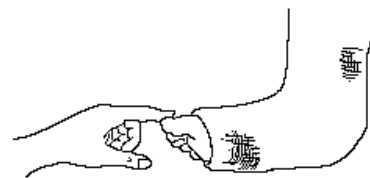
- the cast gets wet down to the padding
- the skin around the cast gets red or sore
- the cast feels very tight or very loose
- there is a bad smell coming from the cast
- the cast cracks or breaks
- the cast gets a new stain from inside
- the pain gets worse
- your fingers or toes get swollen
- your fingers or toes get numb or tingle



Call your doctor if the cast gets a new stain.



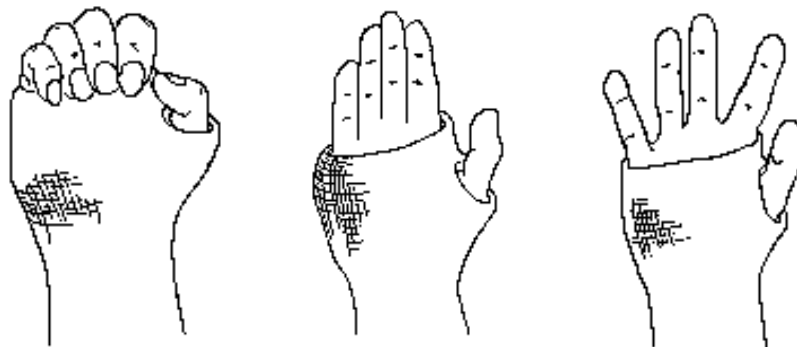
Call your doctor if you get swelling.



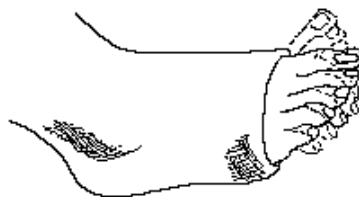
Call your doctor if your fingers or toes feel cold, tingle, or get numb.

More reasons to call your doctor right away:

- your fingers or toes are hard to move
- your fingers or toes feel cold when you touch them and do not get warm when they are covered
- your fingers or toes look blue and they do not go back to normal when they are covered and warm
- your fingers or toes don't fit in the cast the same way (such as the cast slips down)
- you do not have stool (bowel movement) for five days (constipation)
- you have a fever, but you do not have an ear ache or sore throat
- the pain gets worse, especially when you move your fingers or toes



Call your doctor if your fingers or toes are hard to move or the pain gets worse, especially when you move your fingers or toes.



Getting the Cast Off

When the bone is healed, the cast can be taken off. The doctor will take off your cast in a Cast Room, like the one where the cast was put on.

The doctor uses a tool called a cast cutter to cut the cast so it can come off. The cast cutter is made so it will cut the cast, but not you.

When the doctor is cutting your cast, you may feel warm or uncomfortable. This will go away when the doctor is done.

After the cast is cut, the doctor will cut the padding under the cast. The padding is cut with special scissors that will not cut you.

When the cast and padding are off, your leg or arm will look smaller than the other one. This is normal. You have not used that leg or arm as much, and the muscles have gotten weak and smaller.

The doctor may give you exercises to do. These will help build up your leg or arm muscles back to normal size.

After the cast is off, the skin on your arm or leg may look different, too. That's because skin that usually flakes off was trapped under the padding. With washing and time, the skin will look normal, too.

yes no You need to use crutches until your muscles get stronger.

yes no You need to take medicine:

why:

name of medicine:

how much:

when:

Sometimes broken bones don't heal the way we want them to. The doctor will check how you are healing:

Date of next appointment: _____

Time of next appointment: _____



If you have any questions or concerns,
 call your child's doctor or call _____

Now that you've read this:

Tell your nurse or doctor how you will care for the skin around the cast.
(Check when done.)

Tell your nurse or doctor when you will call the doctor. (Check when done.)

If you want to know more about child health and illness,
visit our library at The Emily Center at Phoenix Children's Hospital
1919 East Thomas Road
Phoenix, AZ 85016
602-546-1400
www.phoenixchildrenshospital.com

Disclaimer

The information provided at this site is intended to be general information, and is provided for educational purposes only. It is not intended to take the place of examination, treatment, or consultation with a physician. Phoenix Children's Hospital urges you to contact your physician with any questions you may have about a medical condition.

#7 • Written by Vicki Curry RN and Candace Trafton RN • Illustrated by Dennis Swain
This handout is also available in Spanish as #331/7s.

Cast Care Word Search

The number of blanks (“_”) is the same as the number of letters in the missing word. Write your words in the blanks. Then find them in the puzzle.

The _____ keeps the bone in line until it heals.

Keeping your healing arm ____ will help keep the swelling down. When resting, put a _____ under or around the cast. Turn every two or three hours. Do not stay in the same _____ for a long time.

Do not get the cast _____. If water splashes on the cast, let it dry in the sun or blow dry it with a hair _____ set on _____.

Do not put anything _____ the cast. Do not _____ under the cast.

Use a _____ bath to clean a child with a body cast or long leg cast. Tuck _____ in well, so the cast won't get wet or dirty.

Call your doctor if:

- the pain gets _____
- a bad _____ comes from the cast
- your fingers or toes are hard to _____
- your fingers or toes get swollen, numb, blue, _____ or tingle
- the cast gets wet down to the _____.

C	T	T	M	G	Y	P	W	N	D	R
S	O	U	E	V	W	O	O	R	E	P
C	D	L	R	W	L	I	Y	D	I	I
R	F	I	D	N	T	E	N	W	H	L
A	S	B	A	I	R	U	J	L	Y	L
T	A	S	S	P	S	E	D	C	X	O
C	M	O	M	H	E	M	S	Q	P	W
H	P	O	T	I	P	R	E	R	U	X
O	V	S	R	S	N	C	S	L	O	K
E	A	S	P	O	N	G	E	W	L	W
C	P	A	D	D	I	N	G	M	K	H

Answers are on the next page.

Answers to the Cast Care Word Search

The cast keeps the bone in line until it heals.

Keeping your healing arm up will help keep the swelling down. When resting, put a pillow under or around the cast. Turn every two or three hours. Do not stay in the same position for a long time.

Do not get the cast wet. If water splashes on the cast, let it dry in the sun or blow dry it with a hair dryer set on low.

Do not put anything under the cast. Do not scratch under the cast.

Use a sponge bath to clean a child with a body cast or long leg cast. Tuck diapers in well so the cast won't get wet or dirty.

Call your doctor if:

- the pain gets worse
- a bad smell comes from the cast
- your fingers or toes are hard to move
- your fingers or toes get swollen, numb, blue, cold, or tingle
- the cast gets wet down to the padding.

